How much lactose can I have?

Most people with lactose intolerance can eat or drink some lactose without symptoms. Different people can have different amounts of lactose. For example, one person may have severe symptoms after drinking a small amount of milk. Another person can drink a large amount without symptoms. Some people can easily eat yogurt and hard cheeses such as cheddar and Swiss, while other milk products cause them to have symptoms.

Research suggests that many people could have the amount of lactose in 1 cup of milk in one sitting without symptoms or with only minor symptoms. You may be able to have more lactose if you have it with meals or in small amounts throughout the day.

Many people who have lactose intolerance do not need to avoid milk or milk products completely. If you avoid milk and milk products altogether, you may take in less calcium and vitamin D than you need.